

Newport Forest

Saturday April 6 2008

2:35 - 6:40 pm

weather: prec. 10 mm; RH 59 %; BP 99.35; calm; clr/hz; LM 15 C

purpose: checking flood conditions

participants: Pat & Kee

Before entering the property, I put up two new bird houses for the bluebird trail, while Pat cleaned out the boxes already there. We walked down to the trailer, taking all the incoming material in the wheelbarrow*. After putting up the birdseed, putting out corn for the deer, and taking the weather, we rested in the Nook, happy to see the chipmunks back in action (raiding the seed trays systematically), as well as the first honeybees, one of which became very interested in Pat.

We had never seen the Thames this high before. The crest of a massive flood not seen since 2002 had passed the night before but the river was still high enough to send strong, roiling currents into the BCF, completely submerging the vernal ponds and all else. Floodwaters were edging onto the river side of HBF, as well. The entire FCF was flooded. (too bad the canoe was still in storage in Edgar's garage) We attempted to walk Edgar's Trail, but found ourselves stymied just past the Hole; *everything* was under water! We contented ourselves with a walk around the perimeter of HBF, finding floodwaters creeping in even there!

We were rewarded, nevertheless, by a flight of 14 Wood Ducks passing overhead, as well as a Tufted Titmouse perching in a dead tree. Pat succeeded in finding some Sycamore balls. The Sycamore that Harvey cut a few years ago has resprouted into multiple stems now reaching a height of about 15'. I found several interesting fungi on a fallen BH log, including a Black Jelly Roll, a new lichen and a grey & white bracket fungus that I have seen before, but never ID'd.

We removed all bud protectors except for a few trees that were still vulnerable on the N side of the RZ. I took down the weather station, having decided it was time to build a new one. I put in the new rain gauge, the old one having cracked last fall.

* A small mammal (with 5 mm dia. black scat in ropes) had made a grass house under the overturned wheelbarrow by the gate. I was careful to replace it in exactly the same position when we left.

birds: (24)

American Crow (FCF); American Robin (HBF); Black-capped Chickadee (ER); Blue Jay (LM); Brown Creeper (GF); Common Grackle (UM/FC); Dark-eyed Junco (Tr); Downy Woodpecker (Tr); Eastern Bluebird (UM/Rd); Field Sparrow (UM); Great Blue Heron (FC); Hairy Woodpecker (EW); Mallard (FC); Mourning Dove (LM); Northern Cardinal (BCF); Northern Harrier (UM); Red-bellied Woodpecker (GF); Red-winged Blackbird (EW); Red-tailed Hawk (BCF); Song Sparrow (LM); Tufted Titmouse (HBF/FC); Turkey Vulture (HL); White-breasted Nuthatch (GF); Wood Duck (FCF)

new species:

Lemon Lichen *Candelaria concolor* HBF/FC KD Ap06/08

phenology:

first honeybees, chipmunks
river flood cresting, backing into FC and onto edge of HBF!